Lesson Plan: Responding to Terrorism in a Democracy

FILM: This lesson plan is designed to be used in conjunction with the film *The Fall of Fujimori*, which provides a revealing look at Alberto Fujimori’s ten-year presidency (1990-2000) in Peru, including details of the hard-line strategies used to fight Peru’s war on terrorism. Note: This film contains a few scenes with graphic images of people killed during violent conflicts, as well as occasional profanity. Please preview before classroom use. Also, a significant portion of the film includes subtitles.

P.O.V. documentaries can be taped off-the-air and used for educational purposes for up to one year from the initial broadcast. In addition, P.O.V. offers a lending library of DVD’s and VHS tapes that you can borrow anytime during the school year — FOR FREE!

OBJECTIVES:
In this lesson, students will:
- Watch a video segment and take notes on a Viewing Guide.
- Examine strategies for how a democratic government should respond to terrorism.
- Work in groups to conduct, organize and present research related to civil liberty limitations put in place in the United States during times of war.
- Write an essay that communicates and justifies a point of view.

GRADE LEVEL: 9-12


MATERIALS:
- Map showing the location of Peru, such as this Latin American Politics Map from The Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/interactives/latinpolitics/index.html).
- Handout: Viewing Guide (PDF file)
- Method (varies by school) of showing the class a video clip from the P.O.V. Web site for *The Fall of Fujimori*, or have a copy of the film and a VHS/DVD player and monitor.

ESTIMATED TIME NEEDED: 1-2 class periods
BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
Providing both national security and civil liberties is a delicate balancing act. This lesson uses video of historical events in Peru as a basis for discussion about what strategies are appropriate for a democracy to take when fighting terrorism.

Since Peru gained its independence from Spain in 1821, it has oscillated between democratically elected governments and military dictatorships, eventually ending all military governance in 1980. The Peruvian government has since held democratic elections, and in 1990, Peruvians elected to the office of president, Alberto Fujimori, a son of Japanese immigrants. Peru was plagued by many problems at the time, including the terrorist activities of two leftist organizations, the MRTA (Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru) and the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso). As part of his efforts to combat these groups, Fujimori staged an auto-coup in 1992, when he dissolved the Peruvian congress and courts and seized dictatorial power. He then passed tough anti-terrorism laws that allowed for widespread interrogations, arrests and incarcerations of suspected terrorists. He also set up trials with hooded judges, secret military tribunals and allegedly employed torture and death squads to achieve his goals. Though Fujimori’s tactics were criticized as being undemocratic and a violation of human rights, his administration captured Abimael Guzman, the leader of the Shining Path, in 1992. Eventually, a new constitution was put in place and the MRTA was also defeated. Fujimori became the only Western leader in recent history to credibly claim victory over terrorism.

For more background information on the MRTA, Shining Path, and the situation in Peru before Fujimori’s election, visit The Fall of Fujimori section on the P.O.V. Web site. See also the interview with Robert Goldman, an expert on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, who discusses the lessons that can be learned from Fujimori’s actions in Peru.

ACTIVITY:

1. Ask students to write for a few minutes in their journals about the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States. What were their reactions to what happened? What did they hope the government would do to prevent future attacks? Invite a few students to share what they’ve written.

2. Explain that other countries have also faced problems with terrorist attacks. Show them where Peru is on a map and tell students that 30,000 people there lost their lives over a 20-year period in attacks by the terrorist group, the Shining Path. These terrorists, as well as another terrorist organization in Peru, were shut down while Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori (1990-1995) was in office, making him the only Western leader in recent history to credibly claim victory over terrorism. Tell students that they will be examining the strategies used by Fujimori to win the Peruvian war on terror and discussing what they think are appropriate responses to terrorism in a democracy.

3. Prepare students to watch a 13-minute video clip from The Fall of Fujimori by reviewing the background information and questions on the Viewing Guide handout. Also, explain that the clip begins after Fujimori has taken office and has
felt frustration at a lack of cooperation from the legislative branch of the
government. Begin watching at 23:14 with the scene from the legislative chamber
and the narration, “Fujimori did not have a majority…” and end at 36:38 with
Fujimori saying, “…six or eight years.” (Note: Be sure to screen the clip before
classroom use as it contains two instances of strong language.)

4. After watching the clip, talk about the notes that students took on their handouts.
Discuss:
- In your view, were Fujimori’s methods valid responses to terrorism in a
democracy? Why or why not?
- Did these strategies protect democracy in Peru or harm it? Explain.
- What rights would you be willing to give up for the sake of the “common
good” or the hope of greater security?

5. Explain that during times of war, U.S. presidents have also moved to limit civil
rights in the interests of national security. Divide students into groups and have
each research one of the following:
- Abraham Lincoln and the suspension of habeas corpus (Civil War).
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Japanese Internment/Executive Order
  9066 (World War II).
- George W. Bush and The U.S. Patriot Act and imprisonment of suspected
  terrorists (Post 9/11 “War on Terror”).

6. Each group should report back to the class on what rights were limited in each
circumstance. What prompted such action? Do you think the actions were
justified? Why or why not? Did these strategies protect democracy or harm it?
Why or why not?

7. Conclude by having each student write an essay that explains and justifies his or
her position on what actions are appropriate for a democracy to take in response
to terrorism or during times of war. Students should use historical examples from
the lesson to help make their case. Consider sharing these essays with elected
representatives or helping students host a “town hall” meeting to discuss issues
related to the balance between national security and civil liberties.

ASSESSMENT:
- Give credit for their completion of the Viewing Guide.
- Evaluate group work for quality of research, clarity in the group presentation and
  depth of analysis.
- Assess student essays, looking specifically for a well-defined position statement
  that is supported by strong arguments and historical examples from the lesson.

WORKSHEETS / HANDOUTS:
- Viewing Guide (PDF file)
EXTENSIONS & ADAPTATIONS:

- Read NewsHour EXTRA’s interview with a Peruvian teen (www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/editorials/jan-june00/peru_4-11.html), who discusses the country’s 2000 presidential election. The teen praises Fujimori for the changes brought to Peru during his presidency, and believes that democracy is not always possible, especially in third world nations. Discuss whether or not students agree with this perspective and why.

- Use the Web sites of the U.S. Supreme Court (www.supremecourtus.gov/), Senate (www.senate.gov/), and House of Representatives (www.house.gov/) to track court cases and analyze legislation with issues related to civil liberties and national security. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) (www.aclu.org/natsec/index.html) also provides summaries, document links and commentary from the perspective of limiting government limits on civil liberties.

- After writing the essay for this lesson, have students stage a debate and argue both sides of their assigned presidential action, with one member of the group serving as moderator. Students could even assume historical characters that would be arguing each side. The class could then vote for a side or ask questions.

RESOURCES:

Amnesty International
www.amnesty.org
This organization provides reports on human rights issues related to Alberto Fujimori’s presidency in Peru. Type “Peru” in the Search bar to get a listing.

NOW: Civil Liberties and National Security Timeline
www.pbs.org/now/politics/timeline.html
This resource provides a summary of the points in U.S. history (listed in step five of the ACTIVITY section above) when national security issues prompted limits on civil liberties. The timeline also links to key documents, such as the Alien and Sedition Acts.

Online NewsHour: Stepping Down
www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/latin_america/july-dec00/peru_9-18.html
This report, filed in the final days of Fujimori’s presidency, gives an overview of his term in office and describes his resignation. This story also includes links to other stories about Peruvian politics.

STANDARDS:

Civics
- Standard 2: Understands the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments.
- Standard 25: Understands issues regarding personal, political and economic rights.
- Level IV, Benchmark 1: Understands the importance to individuals and to society of personal rights, such as freedom of thought and conscience, privacy and personal autonomy and the right to due process of law and equal protection of the law.
- Level IV, Benchmark 2: Understands contemporary issues that involve political rights, such as access to classified information and changing the boundaries of congressional and state legislative districts.
- Level IV, Benchmark 6: Understands how personal, political and economic rights are secured by constitutional government and by such means as the rule of law, checks and balances, an independent judiciary and a vigilant citizenry.

**World History**
- **Standard 44**: Understands the search for community, stability and peace in an interdependent world.

Source: “Content Knowledge” (http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp) by McRel (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning)